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THE AFGHAN REVOLUTION AFTER FOUR YEARS

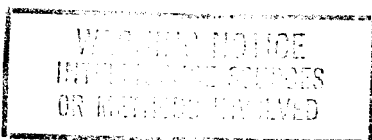
Four years after they seized power on 27 April 1978, the Afghan Communists face strong resistance throughout the country. The weak and divided Babrak regime seems unable to cope with the insurgency, and it must depend on Soviet troops to defeat the resistance.

Although superficially the Soviets appear to have the means to control the Afghan Government and military, they are reluctant to take strong measures to enforce their will because of the risk of further reducing the small number of cooperative Afghans. As a result, Soviet programs are ultimately implemented by a bitterly divided Communist party, and by civil servants and military officers many of whom secretly oppose the Babrak regime.

Social, economic and political programs devised in Moscow and Kabul have failed to overcome the popular perception that Communist policies threaten the Afghan way of life, to establish effective institutions for controlling Afghanistan, or to make any progress toward the improvements -- ranging from democracy to prosperity -- that they have promised. Efforts to achieve popular acceptance will continue, but with almost no chance for success as long as a large part of Afghanistan remains in insurgent hands.

In the past year insurgent control of political districts has grown from 46 to 54 percent. Government control has fallen from 32 percent to 23 percent; control of 23 percent of the districts is split. With a weakened, poorly trained and unreliable army the Government has come to depend almost entirely on the presence of Soviet forces which are now estimated at 105,000. Except in joint operations with the Soviets, Afghan troops can do little more than hold their own garrisons. Moreover, there are increasing indications that we have underestimated the seriousness of the Afghan Army's losses through desertion. Despite troop strength of 30,000-40,000, the Government would quickly fall without Soviet assistance.

The Afghan Government faces multiple, interrelated problems. To recruit men willing to fight for it, the government must be able to implement political, economic and social programs that would make cooperation with Kabul clearly more attractive than opposition. To implement these programs, it must gain control of the countryside. To wrest control from the insurgents, the Government needs an effective army. The Government will not have an effective army until it can recruit men willing to fight for it. The only way to overcome this impasse appears to be to defeat the insurgents with Soviet troops.



25X1

The situation in Afghanistan is getting worse each month, according to an unofficial Soviet assessment. [REDACTED] 25X1
[REDACTED] insurgent attacks and convoy ambushes this 25X1
August were particularly effective, killing more than 50 Soviets and wounding 130 more. Soviet intelligence believes the latest conscription drive to rebuild the Afghan Army is proving ineffective because more men have recently deserted than can be replaced. The pessimistic assessment confirms that Soviet officers -- although negative reports like this one usually are not reported to Moscow -- recognize that this summer's sweep operations have failed to hurt the resistance or reduce insurgent attacks on major supply lines.

The fifth Soviet/DRA attempt to capture the strategic Panjsher Valley during June-July established a minimal DRA presence on the Valley floor, but with heavy casualties. The mujahuddin suffered only slight losses and have renewed attacks on regime outposts. The Soviet determination to maintain control of this important stronghold of insurgent unity and effectiveness may lead to a sixth Panjsher Valley campaign. There have been increased reconnaissance flights over the Valley recently and a supply build-up at Bagram.